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Sir:

Transmitted herewith for filing is the original patent application of:

Inventor: Thiyagesan (nmi) Ramalingam

For: *METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR TRANSMITTING MESSAGES IN A
COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK*

Enclosed are:

Specification, Claims and Abstract (29 Total Pages).
 2 sheets of formal Drawings.
 Combined Declaration and Power of Attorney.
 An Assignment of the invention to Cisco Technology, Inc. A separate
 cover sheet in compliance with 37 C.F.R. §§ 3.28 and 3.31 is included
 with an Assignment recordal fee of \$40.00 pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §
 1.21(h).
 A certificate of mailing and return receipt postcard.
 Applicant is large entity.

FEE CALCULATION					FEE
	Number		Number Extra	Rate	
Total Claims	36	20	16	X \$18.00 =	288.00
Independent Claims	5	3	2	X \$80.00 =	160.00
TOTAL FILING FEE =					\$1,158.00

Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$1,158.00 for filing fee. Please charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of Baker Botts L.L.P. **A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.**

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Attorneys for ApplicantsKevin J. Meek
Registration No 33,738Date: 10.13.00

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of: Thiyagesan (nmi) Ramalingam
Date Filed: October 13, 2000
Title: *METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR TRANSMITTING
MESSAGES IN A COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK*

Box Patent Application
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Patents
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I hereby certify that the attached Patent Application, Declaration and Power of Attorney, Assignment, Assignment Cover Sheet, two sheets of Formal Drawings, Fee Transmittal, this Certificate of Mailing and a check in the amount of \$1,158.00, and a check in the amount of \$40.00 are being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 C.F.R. § 1.10 on this 13th day of October, 2000 and is addressed to the Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231.



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METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR TRANSMITTING MESSAGES IN A
COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to the field of telecommunications and more specifically to a method and system for transmitting messages in a communications network.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Messages in a communications network are often routed using a Signaling System 7 (SS7) protocol. Messages sent by a signal transfer point are received by a signaling gateway and routed to a voice gateway coupled to the signaling gateway. The signal transfer point identifies signaling gateways within the network by a point code that is configured in the signaling gateway. Each new voice gateway requires an additional signaling gateway through which messages are routed, and the signal transfer point is then reconfigured to recognize the new signaling gateway. Such reconfiguration, however, is time-consuming and prone to error.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A method and system for transmitting messages in a communications network is disclosed. A signaling gateway receives a message directed to a destination circuit. 5 Multiple voice gateways, which include a destination voice gateway coupled to the destination circuit, are coupled to the signaling gateway. Circuits, including the destination circuit, are coupled to the voice gateways. The signaling gateway determines the 10 destination voice gateway and sends the message to the destination voice gateway.

A signaling gateway for transmitting a message in a communications network is disclosed. A signaling software stack receives a message directed to a destination circuit, and determines a destination voice gateway coupled to the destination circuit. The destination voice gateway is one of a number of voice gateways coupled to the signaling gateway. A message direction part appends a header to the message. The 15 header includes a voice gateway address that identifies the destination voice gateway. 20

A technical advantage of one embodiment of the system is that multiple voice gateways are coupled to a single signaling gateway. Additional voice gateways may 25 be coupled to the signaling gateway without adding more signaling gateways. Another technical advantage is that a switch coupled to the signaling gateway does not need to be reconfigured when an additional voice gateway is coupled to the signaling gateway.

30 Another technical advantage is that backing up the system does not require creating a redundant set of voice gateways coupled to the backup signaling gateway.

Instead, a backup signaling gateway may be placed into service using existing voice gateways. Still another technical advantage is that message processing may be distributed from the signaling gateway to the voice gateways, thus reducing processing time in the signaling gateway itself. Other technical advantages will be apparent to one skilled in the art from the following detailed description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a more complete understanding of the present invention and for further features and advantages, reference is now made to the following description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

5 FIGURE 1 is a block diagram of one embodiment of a system for transmitting a message in a communications network;

10 FIGURE 2 illustrates one embodiment of message processing between the signaling gateway and the voice gateways of the system of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 3 illustrates one embodiment of a hash table that the signaling gateway of FIGURE 1 may use to determine a voice gateway to which a message is directed;

15 FIGURE 4 illustrates one embodiment of a header that may be appended to a message; and

FIGURE 5 is a flowchart of one embodiment for a method for transmitting a message through the system of FIGURE 1.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGURE 1 is a block diagram of one embodiment of a system 2 for transmitting a message in a communications network. System 2 sets up communication sessions and directs signals in the communications network. Communications may include one or a combination of voice, video, audio, data or other communications. Any suitable protocol may be used in system 2. Because Signaling System 7 (SS7) protocol is typically used as a protocol for voice transfer, terms from the SS7 protocol are used in the following description, but it is understood that the invention could apply to equivalent structures using any appropriate protocol that provide services for directing or establishing communications or otherwise manage components in system 2.

A communications network, which includes system 2, includes one or a combination of a public switched telephone network (PSTN), a public/private communications network, a wireline/wireless network, a local, regional, or global communications network, and/or other suitable circuit-switched or packet based communications network. System 2 includes a switch 10, which may be a central office, end office, or other facility providing communications services. Switch 10 is coupled to a signal transfer point (STP) 20, which transfers signaling messages from one signaling link to another. Signal transfer point 20 is coupled to a signaling gateway (SG) 32 through a communication path 14 of the communications network.

Signal transfer point 20 is configured to recognize signaling gateway 32 by assigning a gateway identifier, for example, a 24-bit point code, to signaling gateway

32. Signaling gateway 32 can manage multiple voice gateways 34 so signal transfer point 20 may recognize one point code or equivalent gateway identifier for multiple voice gateways 34. Thus, system 2 is configured in a 5 single point code architecture. It is understood, however, that the depicted embodiment could include more than one signaling point 30, and consequently more than one point code, if desired. The term "single point code architecture" does not mean that there is only one 10 signaling gateway 32 within the signaling network, but rather indicates that multiple voice gateways 34 can be accessed with a single point code.

Signaling gateway 32 is coupled to voice gateways 34. Signaling gateway 32 and voice gateways 34 are known 15 collectively as a signaling point 30. In general, gateways 32 and 34 intercept and redirect signals from one signaling link to another. Messages may include data, video, audio or other transmittable information. Examples of messages include initial address messages 20 (IAM) to determine whether a circuit 62 is available for transmission, keepalive packets to verify that circuit 62 is active, and release messages to end a connection and free circuit 62 for another connection. In one embodiment, switch 10 is coupled to a communication path 25 12, for example, a T1 trunk, directly to one of several voice gateways (VGs) 34. Communication path 12 may carry, for example, voice, video, or data messages.

Signaling gateway 32 communicates with voice gateways 34 using a communications protocol. Voice 30 gateways 34 are identified within signaling point 30 by an address appropriate to the communications protocol. For example, if the communications protocol is

transmission control protocol/Internet protocol (TCP/IP), the address of each voice gateway 34 is an IP address. Each voice gateway 34 is coupled to a number of circuits 62 that provide a variety of voice, video, and/or data services. "Each" refers to each of a set or each of a subset of the set. Signaling gateway 32 determines which voice gateway 34 is associated with circuits 62 so that a message directed to a particular circuit 62 can be routed to the proper voice gateway 34. A memory 33 coupled to signaling gateway 32 stores a hash table 70 that provides information for determining the voice gateway 34. This recognition and routing process is described in greater detail in conjunction with FIGURES 3 and 4.

In operation, before switch 10 sends messages to a circuit 62, switch 10 verifies that circuit 62 is available to receive messages by sending an initial address message (IAM) to determine whether the circuit 62 is available for connection, or a keepalive packet to verify that circuit 62 is still responding. The initial address message seizes circuit 62 and provides information relating to the handling of the call. After determining availability, switch 10 sends a message. The message includes a header indicating a destination circuit 62 to which the message is directed, which is determined by the destination of the message, for example, a telephone number dialed by a caller. Signal transfer point 20 determines destination circuit 62 and sends the message to signaling gateway 32 associated with destination circuit 62.

30 Signaling gateway 32 receives the message, determines a destination voice gateway 34 coupled to the destination circuit 62, and sends the message to

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destination voice gateway 34. Several embodiments allow signaling gateway 32 to perform these tasks. Such embodiments are described in greater detail in conjunction with FIGURES 3 and 4. Voice gateway 34 receives the message, directs the message to the appropriate circuit 62 if possible, and replies to switch 10 if the message invites a response.

One embodiment of the single point code architecture presents several technical advantages. Signal transfer point 20 does not have to be reconfigured every time a new voice gateway 34 is added to signaling point 30 because signaling gateway 32, which is already recognized by signal transfer point 20, can accommodate the added voice gateway 34. The added voice gateway 34, on the other hand, can readily be reprogrammed by simply downloading software from the signaling gateway 32, reducing system failures due to errors in complicated reconfiguration processes. Additionally, system 2 is readily scalable because installing a new voice gateway 34 does not require adding another signaling gateway 32.

Furthermore, a single point code architecture dramatically reduces the complexity of the backup system. Backup systems are crucial for efficient operation of communications networks. In a multi-point code architecture, where each voice gateway requires its own signaling gateway, backing up the system requires complete replication of signaling point 30 as well as reconfiguration of signal transfer point 20 to recognize the backup system. In a single point code architecture, each component does not need to be replicated individually, thus reducing complexity of the backup systems. For example, if signaling gateway 32 fails, a

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5 backup signaling gateway 38 can take over by assuming the operations of the original signaling gateway 32 in the communications protocol. Backup signaling gateway 38 does not require redundant voice gateways 34 that go unused when the backup system is not being used. Instead, signaling gateway 32 can simply assume management of existing voice gateways 34. Similarly, a new voice gateway 34 can efficiently be put in place of another voice gateway 34 in the communications protocol
10 if one of the voice gateways 34 fail.

15 FIGURE 2 illustrates one embodiment of message processing between signaling gateway 32 and voice gateways 34 of FIGURE 1. In one embodiment, a message is typically routed using one or more message transfer parts (MTPs), which provide processing for routing of messages between signaling points. A user protocol, such as an integrated services digital network (ISDN) user part (ISUP), which provides call setup signaling information between signaling points, may also be used. In multi-point code architectures, the signaling gateway executes
20 all of the protocols. That is, message processing is localized at the signaling gateway. System 2, however, contemplates the use of any suitable messaging or signaling protocol. FIGURE 2 illustrates how processing is distributed among signaling gateway 32 and voice gateways 34 in a single point code architecture.

25 In one embodiment, signaling gateway 32 receives a message. Signaling gateway 32 processes the message using a signaling software stack 41. Signaling software stack 41 identifies the destination circuit 62 to which a message is directed, and determines the destination voice gateway 34 coupled to the destination circuit 62. A hash

table 70 in memory 33, which is described in connection with FIGURE 3, may be used to associate the destination voice gateway 34 with the destination circuit 62.

5 Signaling software stack 41 typically includes three message transfer parts, MTP1 42, MTP2 44, and MTP3 46. The message terminates on each part, that is, the message arrives at an MTP and is directed to another part. For example, MTP1 42 manages a collection of physical circuits, MTP2 44 manages multiple MTP1s 42, and MTP3 46 10 manages multiple MTP2s 44. A message arriving from a physical circuit terminates on MTP1 42. MTP1 42 redirects the message to an MTP2 44, and MTP2 44 redirects the message to an MTP3 66. System 2, however, contemplates any level or combination of MTPs.

15 MTP3 46 of signaling gateway 32 transmits the message to a message direction part 48. Message direction part 48 may append a header to the message, as described in connection with FIGURE 4, or may direct the message using a protocol such as signal control transfer protocol (SCTP). SCTP permits the message to be routed by circuit number without having to convert the circuit number to an IP address, thus saving a processing step. The message is sent to call control 50, which routes the message to the appropriate voice gateway 34 in a manner 20 according to the communications protocol.

25 Voice gateway 34 receives the message and processes the message in a message processing part 52. In message processing part 52, voice gateway 34 may send the message to distribution circuit 62, edit the message to remove a header, generate a responding message for switch 10, or perform other functions relating to the availability of circuits 62 or the transmission of messages to circuits

62. Voice gateway 34 processes the message through a user part 54, for example, an ISDN user part (ISUP). User part 54 may direct setting up, coordinating, and terminating calls in system 2. User part 54 sends the 5 message to a circuit 62.

The division of MTP1, 42, MTP2 44, MTP3 46, and user part 54 between signaling gateway 32 and voice gateways 34 demonstrates how standard message processing may be distributed within a single point code architecture. 10 System 2 contemplates any distribution of processing between signaling gateway 32 and voice gateways 34 or all processing at signaling gateway 32 or all processing at voice gateway 34.

FIGURES 3 and 4 illustrate how signaling gateway 32 may interact with multiple voice gateways 34. FIGURE 3 illustrates a hash table 70 that signaling gateway 32 may use to determine the particular voice gateway 34 to which a message is directed. FIGURE 4 illustrates a header 80 that may be appended to a message directed to a 15 destination voice gateway 34. 20

In one embodiment, signaling software stack 41 of signaling gateway 32 accesses a hash table 70 stored in memory 33. When signaling gateway 32 receives a message directed to circuit 62, signaling software stack 41 uses 25 hash table 70 to determine the address for the proper destination voice gateway 34 that manages and is coupled to destination circuit 62. Hash table 70 associates a circuit identifier 72 of destination circuit 62 with a voice gateway address 76 of destination voice gateway 34 coupled to destination circuit 62. Circuit identifier 72 30 may include a circuit number, and a voice gateway address 76 may include an IP address. Hash table 70 also

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associates circuit identifier 72 with a signaling gateway identifier 74, for example, a point code of a signaling gateway 32 that can access destination circuit 62. Signaling gateway identifier 74 may be used to verify that destination circuit 62 is accessible by the signaling gateway 32 that is processing the message in order to check that the message has been sent to the correct signaling gateway 32.

Once signaling gateway 32 has the proper voice gateway address 76, the message direction part 48 appends header 80, an example is illustrated in FIGURE 4, to the message in order to allow the message to be directed by the communications protocol. The message includes content 78 and header 80 that routes the message through system 2. Header 80 includes circuit identifier 72 and signaling gateway address 82. Signaling gateway address 82 may include an IP address of signaling gateway 32.

Header 80 also includes a sender identifier 84 for the sender of the message so that voice gateway 34 can direct responses to the sender using the communications protocol. The sender may include signal transfer point 20 or switch 10. Sender identifier 84 may include a point code for the sender. Header 80 also includes a keepalive bit 86 that instructs voice gateway 34 whether to send a keepalive response to prevent disconnection with switch 10. For example, the signaling-keepalive bit 86 may be set to "zero" if the voice gateway 32 needs to send a keepalive response to the switch 10 to maintain the connection, and "one" if no response is required, or vice versa.

Hash table 70 and headers 80 allow signaling gateway 32 to direct messages to voice gateways 34. Alternative

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processes may be used. For example, signal control transfer protocol (SCTP), a protocol for transferring messages between IP nodes, may be used to direct messages from signaling gateway 32 to voice gateway 34. SCTP allows messages to be routed by circuit identifier 72 to the voice gateway 34 without translating circuit identifier 72 into an IP address. Alternatively, the communications protocol itself could be tailored to simplify message transfer from signaling gateway 32 to voice gateway 34. For example, the signaling network could use a distributed protocol, such as a Cisco distributed protocol (CDP), that uses a less cumbersome method of node identification than a 4-byte IP address. System 2 contemplates one or a combination of any number of suitable protocols.

FIGURE 5 is a flowchart of one embodiment of a method for transmitting a message in a communications network. The method begins at step 106, where switch 10 sends a message to signal transfer point 20. The message includes a header with a circuit identifier 72 of destination circuit 62 to which the message is directed. Signal transfer point 20 receives the message at step 108 and transfers the message to signaling gateway 32. Signaling gateway 32 receives the message at step 110, and processes the message using MTP1 42, MTP2 44, and MTP3 46 at step 111. MTPs 42, 44, and 46 provide processing for routing signaling messages between signaling points.

From the message header, signaling software stack 41 of signaling gateway 32 identifies circuit identifier 72 of destination circuit 62 at step 112. Signaling software stack 41 determines the voice gateway address 76

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of destination voice gateway 34 that manages destination circuit 62 at step 114. Signaling software stack 41 may look up voice gateway address 76 using hash table 70 that associates circuit identifier 72 with voice gateway address 76. 5 Message direction part 48 appends header 80 to the message at step 116. Header 80 includes circuit identifier 72 of destination circuit 62, signaling gateway address 82, sender identifier 84, and keepalive bit 86. After header 80 is appended, call control 50 routes the message to destination voice gateway 34 at 10 step 118. Call control 50 may use TCP/IP communication protocol to send the message.

Destination voice gateway 34 receives the message at 15 step 120. At step 122, destination voice gateway 34 determines whether a keepalive response is required in order to maintain the communication link based on the value assigned to keepalive bit 86. For example, keepalive bit 86 is "zero" if a keepalive response is required and "one" if a keepalive response is not required. 20 If a keepalive response is required at step 122, the method proceeds to step 124, where voice gateway 34 sends a keepalive response to signaling gateway 32. The method then proceeds to step 126. If a keepalive response is not required at step 122, the method proceeds 25 directly to step 126.

At step 126, voice gateway 34 directs the message to destination circuit 62. Voice gateway 34 may perform additional processing, for example, generating a response to the message or other processing appropriate to the 30 message. Destination circuit 62 sends the message to external network 60 at step 128. After the message is sent, the method terminates.

A signaling network for telecommunications employing a single point code architecture overcomes drawbacks associated with multi-point code architectures. At the same time, it is easily adaptable to use in telecommunications systems. Although embodiments of the invention and its advantages are described in detail, a person skilled in the art could make various alterations, additions, and omissions without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims.

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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for transmitting a message in a communications network, the system comprising:

5 a signaling gateway operable to receive a message directed to a destination circuit;

a plurality of voice gateways coupled to the signaling gateway, the voice gateways comprising a destination voice gateway coupled to the destination circuit; and

10 a plurality of circuits comprising the destination circuit, each circuit coupled to at least one of the voice gateways, wherein the signaling gateway is operable to determine the destination voice gateway and to send the message to the destination voice gateway.

15

2. The system of claim 1, wherein:

the destination voice gateway is associated with an Internet protocol address; and

the signaling gateway is operable to:

20 associate the destination circuit with the Internet protocol address; and

send the message to the destination voice gateway by using the Internet protocol address.

25

3. The system of claim 1, further comprising a hash table associating a circuit with a voice gateway coupled to the circuit, wherein the signaling gateway is operable to determine the destination voice gateway by using the hash table.

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4. The system of claim 1, further comprising a hash table associating the signaling gateway with the destination circuit, wherein the signaling gateway is operable to determine that the message is at the appropriate signaling gateway by using the hash table.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein:
10 the signaling gateway is operable to execute one or more message transfer parts, each message transfer part operable to direct the message to at least one of the voice gateways; and

15 at least one voice gateway is operable to execute an integrated services digital network user part, the integrated services digital network user part operable to provide signaling information to a circuit.

6. The system of claim 1, further comprising a message direction part operable to append a header to the message, the header comprising an address associated with the signaling gateway and a circuit identifier associated with the destination circuit.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein the header comprises a sender identifier identifying a sender of the message.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the message comprises data information.

30 9. The system of claim 1, wherein the message comprises video information.

10. A method for transmitting a message in a communications network, the method comprising:

receiving a message at a signaling gateway coupled to a plurality of voice gateways, the message directed to 5 a destination circuit;

determining a destination voice gateway coupled to the destination circuit, the voice gateways comprising the destination voice gateway; and

communicating the message to the destination voice 10 gateway.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

associating the destination circuit with an Internet 15 protocol address identifying the destination voice gateway; and

communicating the message to the destination voice gateway by using the Internet protocol address.

12. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

associating a circuit with a voice gateway using a 20 hash table, the circuit coupled to the voice gateway; and determining the destination voice gateway by using the hash table.

25 13. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

associating the signaling gateway with the destination circuit using a hash table; and

determining that the message is at the appropriate signaling gateway by using the hash table.

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14. The method of claim 10, further comprising:
executing one or more message transfer parts at the
signaling gateway, the message transfer part operable to
direct the message from the signaling gateway to at least
one of the voice gateways; and

executing an integrated services digital network
user part at a voice gateway, the integrated services
digital network user part operable to provide signaling
information to a circuit.

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15. The method of claim 10, further comprising
appending a header to the message, the header comprising
an address associated with the signaling gateway and a
circuit identifier associated with the destination
circuit.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the header
comprises a sender identifier identifying a sender of the
message.

20

17. The method of claim 10, wherein the message
comprises data information.

25

18. The method of claim 10, wherein the message
comprises video information.

19. A signaling gateway for transmitting a message in a communications network, the signaling gateway comprising:

a signaling software stack operable to:

5 receive a message directed to a destination circuit, and

determine a destination voice gateway operable to communicate the message to the destination circuit, the destination voice gateway one of a plurality of voice 10 gateways coupled to the signaling gateway; and

a message direction part operable to append a header to the message, the header comprising a voice gateway address identifying the destination voice gateway.

15 20. The signaling gateway of claim 19, wherein:
the destination voice gateway is associated with an Internet protocol address; and
the header comprises the Internet protocol address.

20 21. The signaling gateway of claim 19, further comprising a hash table associating a circuit with a voice gateway coupled to the circuit, wherein the signaling software stack is operable to determine the destination voice gateway by using the hash table.

25 22. The signaling gateway of claim 19, further comprising a hash table associating the signaling gateway with the destination circuit, wherein the signaling software stack is operable to determine that the message 30 is at the appropriate signaling gateway by using the hash table.

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23. The signaling gateway of claim 19, wherein the header comprises a circuit identifier associated with the destination circuit.

5 24. The signaling gateway of claim 19, wherein the
header comprises a sender identifier identifying a sender
of the message.

10 25. The signaling gateway of claim 19, wherein the message comprises data information.

26. The signaling gateway of claim 19, wherein the message comprises video information.

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27. A system for transmitting a message in a communications network, the system comprising:

means for receiving a message at a signaling gateway coupled to a plurality of voice gateways, the message directed to a destination circuit;

means for determining a destination voice gateway coupled to the destination circuit, the voice gateways comprising the destination voice gateway; and

means for communicating the message to the destination voice gateway.

10

28. The system of claim 27, further comprising:

means for associating the destination circuit with an Internet protocol address identifying the destination voice gateway; and

means for communicating the message to the destination voice gateway by using the Internet protocol address.

20

29. The system of claim 27, further comprising:

means for associating a circuit with a voice gateway using a hash table, the circuit coupled to the voice gateway; and

means for determining the destination voice gateway by using the hash table.

25

30. The system of claim 27, further comprising:

means for associating the signaling gateway with the destination circuit using a hash table; and

means for determining that the message is at the appropriate signaling gateway by using the hash table.

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31. The system of claim 27, further comprising:
means for executing one or more message transfer
parts to direct the message from the signaling gateway to
at least one of the voice gateways; and

5 means for executing an integrated services digital
network user part at a voice gateway, the integrated
services digital network user part operable to provide
signaling information to a circuit.

10 32. The system of claim 27, further comprising
means for appending a header to the message, the header
comprising an address associated with the signaling
gateway and a circuit identifier associated with the
destination circuit.

15 33. The system of claim 32, wherein the header
comprises a sender identifier identifying a sender of the
message.

20 34. The system of claim 27, wherein the message
comprises data information.

35. The system of claim 27, wherein the message
comprises video information.

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36. Signaling software embodied in a computer-readable medium and operable to perform the following:

receiving a message at a signaling gateway coupled to a plurality of voice gateways, the message directed to 5 a destination circuit;

determining a destination voice gateway coupled to the destination circuit, the voice gateways comprising the destination voice gateway; and

communicating the message to the destination voice 10 gateway.

37. The signaling software of claim 36, further operable to:

associate the destination circuit with an Internet 15 protocol address identifying the destination voice gateway; and

communicate the message to the destination voice gateway by using the Internet protocol address.

20 38. The signaling software of claim 36, further operable to:

associate a circuit with a voice gateway using a hash table, the circuit coupled to the voice gateway; and 25 determine the destination voice gateway by using the hash table.

39. The signaling software of claim 36, further operable to:

associate the signaling gateway with the destination 30 circuit using a hash table; and

determine that the message is at the appropriate signaling gateway by using the hash table.

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40. The signaling software of claim 36, further operable to:

execute one or more message transfer parts at the signaling gateway, the message transfer part operable to direct the message from the signaling gateway to at least one of the voice gateways; and

execute an integrated services digital network user part at a voice gateway, the integrated services digital network user part operable to provide signaling information to a circuit.

41. The signaling software of claim 36, further operable to append a header to the message, the header comprising an address associated with the signaling gateway and a circuit identifier associated with the destination circuit.

42. The signaling software of claim 41, wherein the header comprises a sender identifier identifying a sender of the message.

43. The signaling software of claim 36, wherein the message comprises data information.

44. The signaling software of claim 36, wherein the message comprises video information.

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45. A system for transmitting a message in a communications network, the system comprising:

a signaling gateway operable to receive a message directed to a destination circuit;

5 a plurality of voice gateways coupled to the signaling gateway, the voice gateways comprising a destination voice gateway coupled to the destination circuit, the voice gateways operable to execute an integrated services digital network user part, the 10 integrated services digital network user part operable to provide signaling information to a circuit; and

15 a hash table associating the destination circuit with the destination voice gateway, the hash table associating the signaling gateway with the destination circuit;

a plurality of circuits comprising the destination circuit, each circuit coupled to at least one of the voice gateways, wherein the signaling gateway is operable to:

20 execute one or more message transfer parts, each message transfer part operable to direct the message to at least one of the voice gateways;

determine the destination voice gateway by using the hash table;

25 determine that the message is at the appropriate signaling gateway by using the hash table;

associate the destination circuit with an Internet protocol address identifying the destination voice gateway;

30 append a header to the message, the header comprising an address associated with the signaling gateway, a circuit identifier associated with the

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destination circuit, and a sender identifier identifying a sender of the message; and

send the message to the destination voice gateway.

METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR TRANSMITTING MESSAGES IN A
COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and system for transmitting messages in a communications network is disclosed. A signaling gateway receives a message directed to a destination circuit. The signaling gateway is coupled to multiple voice gateways, including a destination voice gateway coupled to the destination circuit. The signaling gateway determines the destination voice gateway and sends the message to the destination voice gateway.

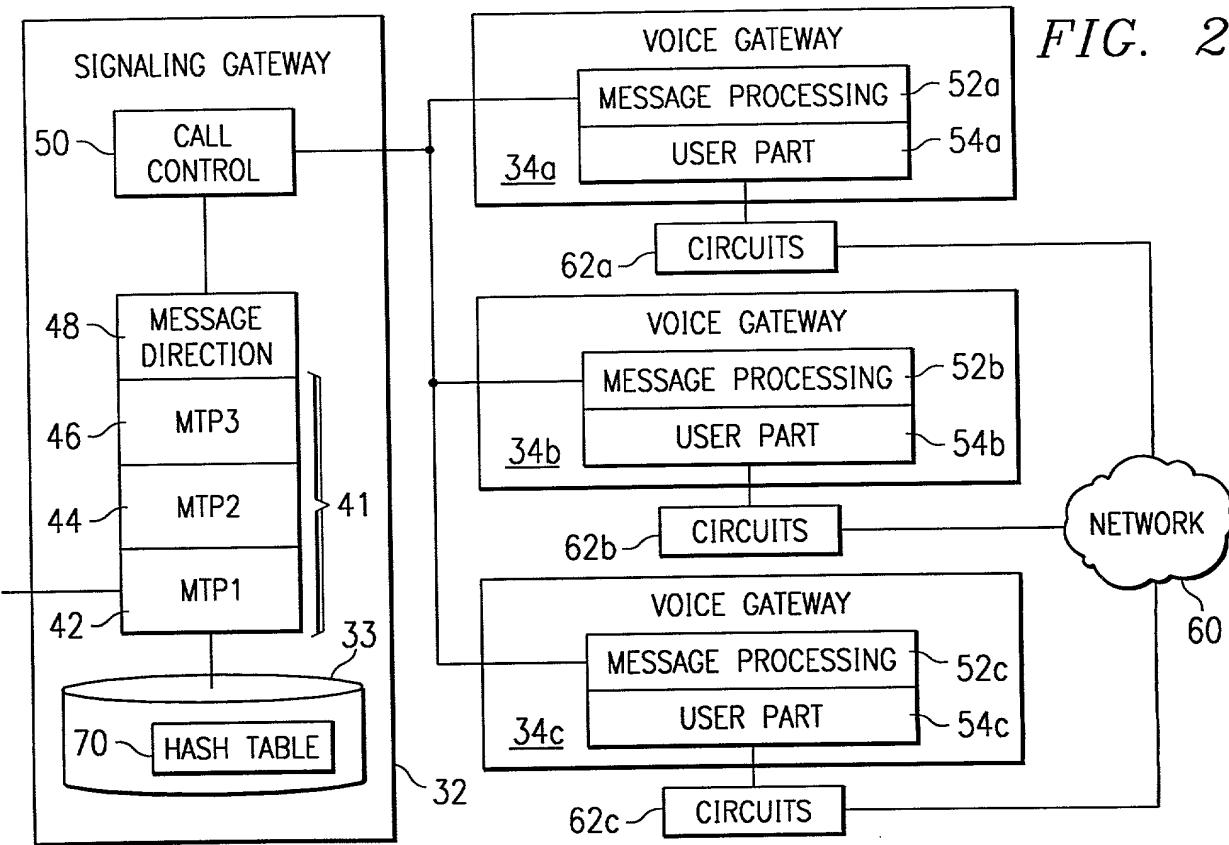
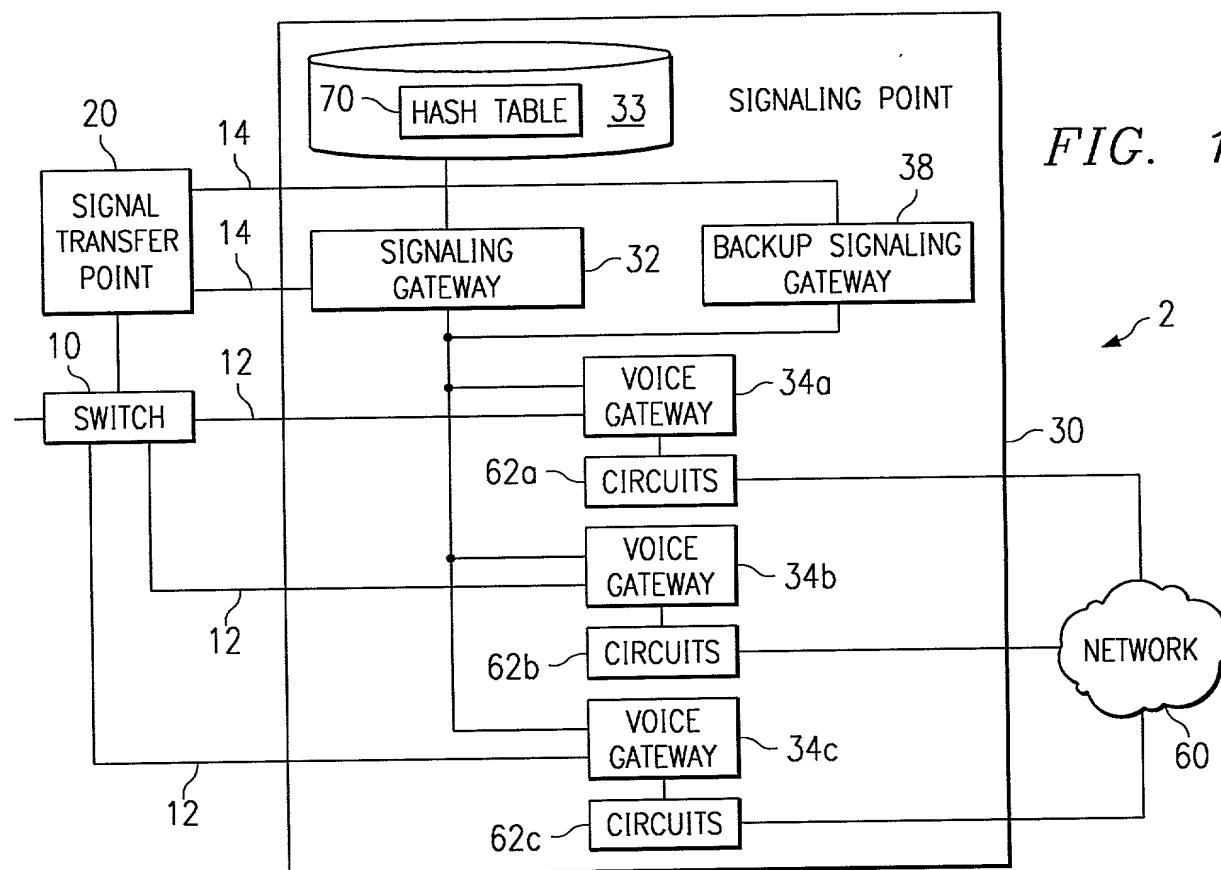


FIG. 3

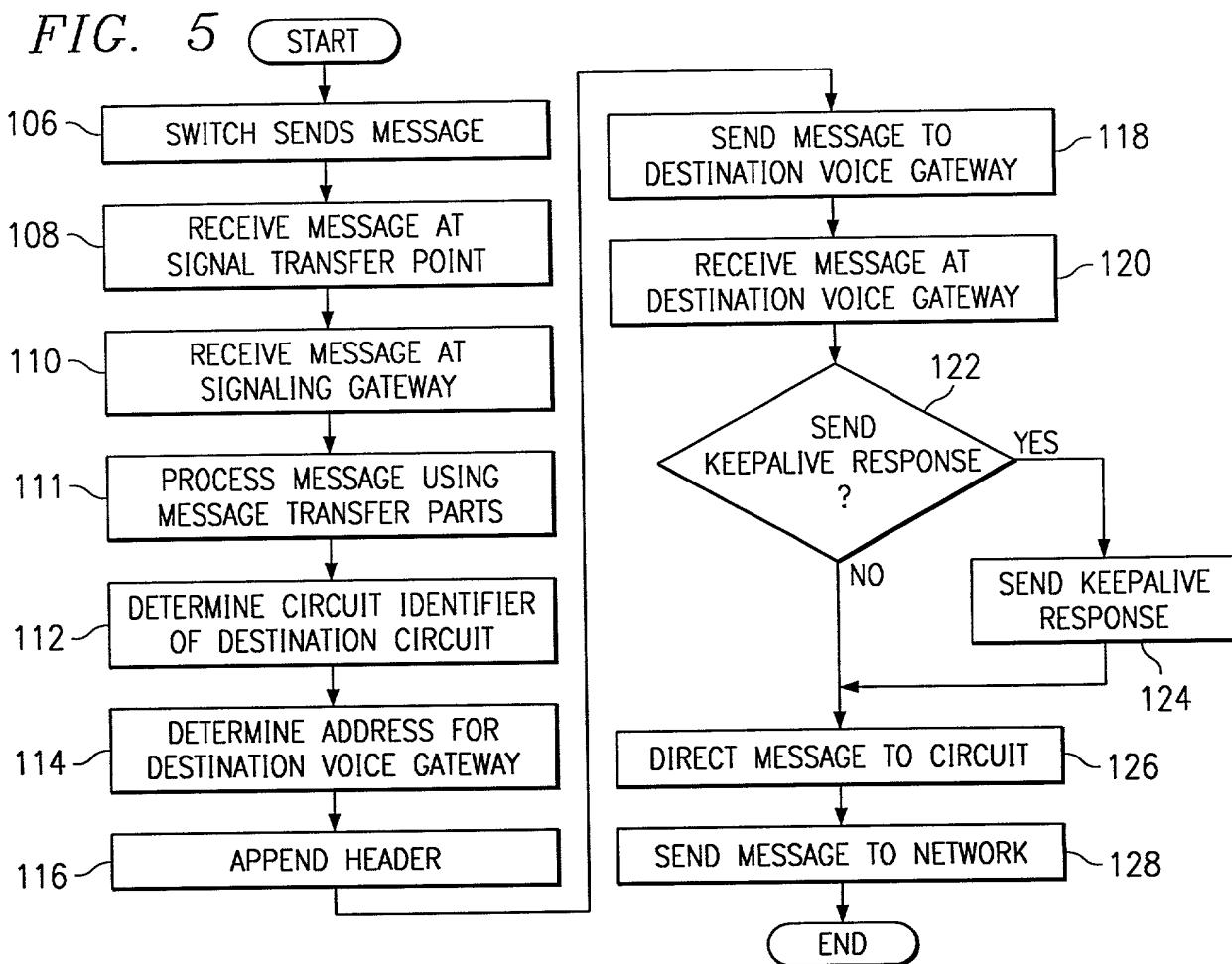
70 CIRCUIT IDENTIFIER	72 SIGNALING GATEWAY IDENTIFIER	74 VOICE GATEWAY ADDRESS
00001	192.20.71.80	172.20.71.34
⋮	⋮	⋮
20001	184.32.21.83	172.31.92.20
⋮	⋮	⋮

2 BYTES 4 BYTES 4 BYTES

FIG. 4

82 SIGNALING GATEWAY ADDRESS	72 CIRCUIT IDENTIFIER	84 SENDER IDENTIFIER	86 KEEPALIVE BIT	78 CONTENT
80 HEADER				

FIG. 5



DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name, that I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention, design or discovery entitled **METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR TRANSMITTING MESSAGES IN A COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK**, the specification of which is attached hereto;

That I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above; that I do not know and do not believe that said invention, design or discovery was ever known or used in the United States of America before my invention or discovery thereof, or patented or described in any printed publication in any country before my invention or discovery thereof, or more than one year prior to this application, or in public use or on sale in the United States of America more than one year prior to this application; that said invention, design or discovery has not been patented or made the subject of an inventor's certificate issued prior to the date of this application in any country foreign to the United States of America on an application filed by me or my legal representatives or assigns; and that I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in 37 C.F.R. § 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. § 119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Number	Country	Date Filed	Priority Claimed (Yes) (No)
-----NONE-----			

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application(s) in the manner provided by the first

paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in 37 C.F.R. § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application(s) and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

<u>Application Serial Number</u>	<u>Date Filed</u>	<u>Status</u>
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-----NONE-----

I hereby appoint:

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all of the firm of Baker Botts L.L.P., my attorneys with full power of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the United States Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith, and to file and prosecute any international patent applications filed thereon before any international authorities.

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Atty. Docket No. 062891.0438

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issuing thereon.

Full name of the sole or first inventor:

Thiyagesan (nmi) Ramalingam

Inventor's signature



Date

10. 11. 2000

Residence (City, County, State)

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Citizenship

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